(b) The NDDB has been requested by Department of Agriculture and Cooperation (Horticulture Division) to undertake pilot testing of concept and functioning of Horticulture markets in one of the centres.

(c) and (d) A request for setting up horticulture auction market has been received by the NDDB from Andhra Pradesh. The request will be considered after the Commissioning of Bangalore Market this year.

Selection of farmers under NAIS

†3180. SHRI MOTILAL VORA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) the number of the farmers who were benefited under agriculture insurance scheme all over the country during the current financial year and the number of farmers proposed to be provided with benefits thereunder in the coming financial years, State-wise; and

(b) the details of bases on which the selection of farmers has been made/will be made?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) Information on the number of farmers benefited in a particular financial year is available only on completion of that financial year.

Fixation of targets for coverage of farmers is not possible because (i) the scheme provides coverage against natural calamities which are unforeseen (ii) the scheme is optional.

(b) The scheme is optional for the States/UTs. The State Government/UT Administration, which opts for the scheme, is required to notify the areas and crops to be covered under the scheme. The loanee farmers availing seasonal agricultural operation loans for the notified crops in the notified area from rural financial institutions are compulsorily covered. Non-loanee farmers may or may not opt for the scheme.

Increasing sugarcane production

†3181. SHRIMATI PREMA CARIAPPA :
SHRI MOTILAL VORA:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(a) whether Government are aware that keeping in view the increasing consumption of sugar in the country, if the production of sugarcane is not enhanced by 2007, a situation of import of sugar may arise;

(b) whether there is little possibility of increasing the production of sugarcane in near future owing to the scarcity of water all over the country;

(c) if so, whether Government would pay attention towards developmental schemes for sugarcane and increasing the production of sugar and also towards providing water for irrigation purposes; and

(d) if so, by when?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) As per the Report of the Task Force on Sugar Industry for the Tenth Five Year Plan 2002-07, the projected sugar production would fall short of the projected sugar consumption by around 4 lakh tonnes in 2006-07.

(b) to (d) In order to improve the productivity and production of sugarcane a Centrally Sponsored Scheme on Sustainable Development of Sugarcane Based Cropping System Areas was launched by the Ministry of Agriculture during 1995-96 in 20 States and one Union Territory. The expenditure on the scheme was mostly shared on 75:25 basis between the Government of India and State Governments.

The main thrust of the scheme was on the transfer of technology to the farmers through field demonstrations, training of farmers/extension workers, promotion of resources base of farmers through supply of farm implements enhancing seed production and pest control measures.

Under the scheme, assistance was provided to the State Governments on (i) Field Demonstration (ii) Farmers Training (iii) State Level Training (iv) Implements (a) Bullock Drawn (b) Tractor Drawn (v) Seed Multiplication (vi) Heat Treatment Plant (vii) Drip Infrastructure (viii) Contingency.

From 4th October, 2000 the above scheme has been subsumed under Macro Management mode of agriculture to give more flexibility to the States to implement the desired component for increasing production and productivity of sugarcane in the States;

Keeping in view the need to create additional irrigation potential, the Government has taken various policy and programme initiatives.These include creation of additional irrigation potential through new major, medium and minor irrigation projects; completion of ongoing projects; rehabilitation and modernization of existing irrigation systems; restructuring and reorientation of the Command Area Development Programme; improving water management practice through Participatory Irrigation Management, promoting efficient and economic use of water for various purposes and laying emphasis on water conservation through various methods including use of latest technologies.

In addition to allocation in the State Plans under the irrigation sector, Central Government is also providing financial assistance to the States in the form of loans under the Accelerated Irrigation Benefit Programme (AIBP), launched by the Central Government during 1996-97. Under the programme financial assistance in the form of Central loan is being extended to State Governments to help them complete ongoing irrigation projects in a time bound manner so that the benefits could accrue at the earliest. A Fast Track Programme under the AIBP has also been introduced with effect from February, 2002 to provide 100% loan assistance for those projects which can be completed within one year (two working seasons).

Production cost of agricultural products

†3182. SHRI RAM JETHMALANI :
SHRI RAJIV RANJAN SINGH 'LALAN':

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that the production cost of the agricultural products will have to be reduced for making improvement in the agricultural sector in the country;

(b) if so, the reaction of Government in the matter;

(c) whether it is also a fact that the production cost of the agricultural products can be reduced by increasing the production rate and enlarging the area of irrigated land; and

(d) if so, the production rate with regard to the irrigated land as well as the non-irrigated land in the country together with its impact on the production cost?

†Original Notice of the question was received in Hindi.